1: Honigmann E-6 (1963-1965) 1969 ND12 Nahane ND12

SOCIAL CULTURE

128 THE second major division of Kaska culture to be described, is derived from those ideas and activities which reflect the individual's adjustment to other individuals. In many situations such adjustment is essential for the execution of adaptive behaviors but it also represents the solution of additional problems arising out of interpersonal relations. Social culture has been divided into three subdivisions: interpersonal organization, ranging from the family to local groups; interpersonal relations in the larger society, including property, governmental, legal, sexual, and other relations between individuals; and those interpersonal relations entering into the lifecycle.

ORGANIZATION

Family

592 The nuclear family in Kaska society consists of a married couple and their true or adopted
594 children. Such a group is sometimes augmented by the presence of additional relatives, as for example, an aged or widowed grandparent, an orphaned grandchild, or the orphaned children of a mother's sister or father's brother. A family may also contain temporarily the unmarried siblings of either spouse. The Kaska family corresponds closely to the settlement described above in which the group occupies a single residence. If more than one family live in a settlement, they usually occupy separate dwellings.

592 Authority in the family is ideally invested in the husband, although actually the wife
593 is consulted in all important considerations and may also originate action by influencing
[illegible] her husband's decisions. The authority of the husband is maintained even if the family happens to contain a grandparent. Although under conditions of matrilocal residence, a father may offer advice to his son-in-law, such advice is not given in an authoritative fashion and, once the marriage is established, does not dispute the authority of the husband. The
[illegible] importance of the father is also reflected in the fact that, despite the system of matrilineal
[illegible] succession, family names follow the patrilineal line.

Functionally the family is of great importance, constituting the primary economic unit of the society. It is able to provide its own capital goods and to exploit the environment in order to secure necessary consumer goods. Cooperation tends to be restricted to the family, but even here it cannot be demanded except from a young, unmarried son or daughter. A young married couple will generally trap together, but once children are born, the man will look to others for trapline companionship and assistance. Helpers secured in this way enter what may be described as a *protégé* relationship. That is, the partner is often a related or unrelated youth who is taught the art of trapping, freely loaned traps, and extended the privilege of using the trapping territory. Such a partnership is founded primarily on congeniality and is readily dissolved. Sometimes a family takes along a mature girl or young widow. The girl helps the wife in household duties, but may also trap, using resources which are loaned her by the family with whom she resides. "They live on you. They get no money and live on you, helping till they get husband."

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1965) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

refers to an unrelated married woman by the first name of the husband with the prefix "mama." Between two women, the given name is generally employed.

Larger Social Groups

Social organization beyond kinship is of slight functional significance in Kaska society and, even more than the kinship system, is largely of categorical importance. The organization of the Kaska nation into tribes occupying loosely defined geographical districts has already been discussed.[1] There are four tribes known as the Frances Lake, Upper Liard River, Dease River, and Nelson Indians. The degree of emotional identification is relatively slight and would seem to be highest among the Upper Liard Indians. Here, however, relations between intertribal neighbors are, as we shall see, riddled by considerable suppressed antagonism. Although there is a tendency to restrict marriage within tribal units, many marriages have taken place between these units with a consequent diffusion of tribal membership and identification.

No single pattern for determining membership in a specific district or tribe seems to obtain. Old Man reported that a man belongs to the country of his father. He called himself a Liard River Indian, although his father was a Pelly Indian and his mother belonged to the Liard River tribe. In general a person seems to belong to the tribal district or tribe in which he was born and raised, regardless of the tribe from which his parents originally came. This is not final, however. A man who changes his residence with marriage, generally becomes identified with the country in which he takes up residence and begins to trap. For a time, he continues to be referred to as belonging to the district from which he originally came. As his roots grow deeper in the adopted district, he begins to be identified with that tribe. Because of the frequent shifting of residence that occurred up to about thirty years ago, and the frequency of tribal intermarriage which still continues, the districts present a far from perfect correlation with tribal designation. For example, the bulk of families in the Frances Lake district are reported to have originally lived in the Upper Liard River region. Of the four family heads known as Upper Liard River Indians, only one was born in that region and his youth was spent in many parts of the total Kaska area.

Most of the Kaska Indians are divided into two nonlocalized, matrilineal "sides" or moieties, the members of each of which feel vaguely related.[2] Although these sides are identified by the names of two animals, the Crow and Wolf respectively, there is little thought that a person has actually descended from a wolf or crow. Since neither of these two animals is customarily eaten, it is meaningless to talk of totemic food taboos. Both animals are readily killed, however, and the wolf is trapped for its fur as well as for the bounty paid on the pelt. The importance of the moiety is slight. Formal organization is lacking, there being no executives and no mechanisms to bring about the unified functioning of the group as a whole. The principal functions of the moiety lie in the regulation of mar-

[1] See above, pp. 31-33.

[2] Writing in 1908, Allard gives the impression of a number of unilineal kin groups. "The tribe," he says, referring to the Kaska," is divided into *ahs*, such as Wolf (*tsa ye ahh*), Crow (*ishka*), Bear (*ish*), etc." No evidence of more than two exogamous groups could be adduced. By the Bear "*ah*," Allard is probably referring to the Bear Lake Indians, who trapped up along the Muddy River and traded into McDame Creek and Lower Post. Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* (1908), 10.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1963-1965) 1949 ND12 Nahanni ND12

The principal function of the society lies in the regulation of marriage through the rule of exogamy and the supervision of postnuptial residence. The former function constitutes the manifest explanation for adhering to these divisions. Thus Rover Joe explained that the moieties, going far back in time, serve to prevent anyone from getting "mixed up" and marrying a too closely related person. Any ideas of the superiority of one side over the other could not be adduced.

Certain individuals identified with the Kaska Indians lack affiliation with any side. These are either Slave Indians, who have married into the Kaska nation, or else members of the Nelson tribe. The latter people never followed the moiety pattern of their neighbors. Such individuals generally receive a conventional moiety identification when they marry a member of either exogamous group. No gesture is made toward formalizing such allegiance, the person being verbally identified with the appropriate side or being told to eat with that side at a potlatch. A woman whose moiety membership has been determined by convention transmits this affiliation to her children. There is no question, however, but that such conventional affiliations are less binding than more clearly established moiety membership. Children of a woman whose affiliation was established by convention are often permitted to marry endogamously and even the grandchildren of such a woman are recognized as having extremely weak ties with other members of their side. Sometimes an effort is made to regularize the apparent endogamy of such marriages by having one of the spouses alter her moiety membership. Thus Old Man married the Cree-Kaska daughter of a Cree woman from Fort Nelson. The first Mrs. Man was commonly regarded as a Crow. After she married Old Man, a Crow, however, she was designated as a Wolf. Some people were encountered who had "forgotten" their side and thereafter married girls whom, they later discovered, belonged to their moiety. Louis Man married a Wolf woman although he himself had been born of a Wolf mother. He later changed his membership to the Crow side. It must not be supposed that such forgetting is common. Louis blamed the priests for having "mixed up" the people regarding their moiety affiliations.

All of the Kaska Indians and Sekani who trade into Lower Post (but excluding the Frances Lake people who generally frequent their own trading post), local white traders, the missionaries, white trappers, and government functionaries may be recognized as members of the community—a "maximal group of persons who normally reside together in face-to-face association."[9] A number of Tahltan Indians from the area southeast and south of Lower Post also frequently visit the settlement and these may be recognized as temporary members of the community. The one or two Tahltan families who maintain permanent residences in Lower Post are, of course, full fledged members. Social interaction between these people is largely restricted to summer and is maintained through visiting; attendance at dances, church, and school; friendship; marriage; gambling and loitering. The total community, as has already been described, gathers in the spring and is dissolved in late summer, when most of its members disperse to their trapping districts and winter settlements. Community interaction during the Christmas and other winter visits to the post is primarily supported through visiting and encounters in the restaurant and bunkhouses.

The Indian section of the community (hereafter referred to as the Indian community) tends to divide itself into three sections, roughly corresponding to the tribal groups trading

[9] Murdock, et al., *Outline of Cultural Materials* (1961), 19.

1: Honigmann, E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

parties centered to children by the missionaries, the
most important festival is the potlatch. This occasion is ideally a presentation of food by the
members of one matrilineal moiety to those of the other and is designed to honor the memory
of one or more deceased members of the hosts' side. The "Wolf party" observed in 1945,
however, included guests belonging to both moieties and was organized and financed by a
Crow man and his Wolf daughters. A few days after the Wolf party, Louis Maza apologized, explaining that he was "a little crazy" the day of the potlatch when he had let both
moieties eat. He blamed his confusion on having been intoxicated the morning of the
festival. His apology indicated that people had commented on the mixing, regarding it as
incorrect. Louis stated that the subsequent Crow party would not be mixed. His promise
was partly fulfilled, in that eating was limited to adult guests of the Wolf side, but children
belonging to both moieties were served. Prior to 1945, the last potlatch in the Kaska area is
reported to have taken place at McDame Creek around 1930.

Ideally a potlatch is organized by a deceased person's brothers or maternal uncles.
Manifestly, however, fathers, daughters, and husbands were observed to organize these
parties. The male organizers undertake the task of securing the food to be eaten, while
sisters and female parallel cousins cooperate in the cooking and serving. The Wolf party,
which was designed to honor the memory of Mrs. River Joe who had died nine months
previously, was directed by River Joe and his son-in-law, Louis Maza (both Crow), while
the food preparation was under the control of Joe's several Wolf daughters and their
parallel cousins. This potlatch, like the following Crow party, was celebrated in Louis
Maza's large home. Financial support was contributed by a majority of the members of the
Wolf side, about $120 being collected. The functions of the party, as stated by River Joe,
were to "help" the deceased, to have "fun," and to "Make good time for [in memory of] my
missus." A chronological record of events marking the first potlatch of 1945 is given below.

6:11:45. In the presence of River Joe, Old Man explained that there might be a potlatch in
memory of River Joe's wife who died last October. He explained that Skipper or the latter's
brother could "make" such a potlatch, because they belonged to the dead woman's side.

7:11:45. River Joe went to Teslin Lake in order to fetch his daughter and the latter's
Taku Indian husband.

7:5:45. River Joe returned from Teslin Lake in his son-in-law's truck. He was fired with the
idea of giving a "potlatch party" for his wife but quite resented the notion that this would
be an old fashioned procedure, pointing out that at Teslin village the Indians all observed this
custom.

7:6:45. River Joe and his sons-in-law, Louis Maza and the Taku youth, went to the Hudson's Bay Company with the latter's truck. Here they bought a large quantity of food and piled
it in the back of the vehicle which then proceeded to Louis' home where the cooking would be
done. River Joe announced he would collect money from the members of his wife's side who
were camping across the river.

7:7:45. Today River Joe's daughters cooked and baked for the Wolf party tomorrow.
River Joe said that his daughters were giving the potlatch for their mother, but that he had
also contributed fifteen dollars to the expenses. "Me boss that party. Bye and bye somebody
lose his missus. He boss for him." He agreed that the decision for a potlatch was (could be?) in
the hands of the widower. Louis Maza indicated that the potlatch might last for six days and
refused to consider the possibility of the police blocking it as a result of the meningites quarantine attached to the reserve where his house is located.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

In contrast to the enthusiasm invested in the preparations for the party, there was very little emotional display at the meal itself, and several signs were observed of people being ill at ease. Thus it was necessary for Louis Maza repeatedly to urge people to go into the house and eat. Except among some old men, there was little sign of gaiety or festivity. As each man filed into the building he removed his hat and silently took his place. Conversation during the meal was slight.

Plans to revive the old fashioned potlatch dance were not fulfilled. A number of older people were finally persuaded to line up and execute a few movements, but this behavior was not spontaneous and the embarrassed laughter of the younger folks apparently disconcerted the dancers.

After having eaten, the guests gathered outside the house where two fires were built against the chill of the evening. Five gallons of coffee were heating alongside one fire. Louis Maza several times distributed cigars and cigarettes around the two circles of guests as well as oranges to the children, who were enjoying a riotous time. After the dishes had been washed by the women of the Wolf sib, the guests reentered the house to retrieve their cups, plates, and tableware. Considerable confusion resulted in this distribution and many people were unable to find their own objects. Even Louis Maza lost several of his own utensils, all of which suggests that some people, who had not come with tableware, went home with utensils not belonging to them.

On the day following the potlatch meal, a number of Crow people returned to Louis' house where his wife and her sisters distributed packages of food, tins of jam that had never been touched, fruit, and cake left over from the party.

The second potlatch on July 13 was designed as a return party by the Crow moiety. Louis placed himself in charge of the preparations and was assisted by his father-in-law. The cooking and serving were undertaken by Dorothy Plover, her cousin, and the ethnographer, who was conventionally designated as a Crow. The food was cooked in the residence of a white trader and transported to the potlatch in Louis Maza's boat. In Louis' house it was kept warm on the stove. The potlatch this time began at one o'clock in the afternoon and was completed by six o'clock. Behavior held to the same emotional tenor that was described for the first party except that considerable amusement was furnished by the several white trappers who attended while intoxicated but who caused no trouble. No attempt was made to introduce dancing, although a social dance in Liard Tom's house was announced as a part of the festival and took place later in the evening.

Music. The only musical instruments played by the Kaska are the violin and guitar. Many men are accomplished "fiddlers," while most boys and girls can play accompaniments on the guitar. All musical ability is patiently self-taught and is motivated by the individual's personal desire to learn. A new tune is generally picked up by listening to a Tahltan Indian visitor play it. The Tahltan, in turn, learn new melodies by listening to the recorded words and music. Such double, and sometimes triple, transmission by ear results in a melody often being considerably altered from its original form. The most popular tunes include: "I Know What It Means to be Lonely," "Take Me Back to Tulsa," "My Dixie Darling," "Wabash Cannonball," "Red River Valley," and "You Are My Sunshine." These are not only played at dances but are often sung or whistled around town and camp. Local Tahltan

301 They were circular in shape and resembled buttons, rings,
304 apparently cut out in a single piece from some kind of
321 fine bone or ivory. The small ends sprung apart and were inserted in the septum of the nose. It is unknown whether these bone nose ornaments were made by the Tahltan or procured from other tribes. In later times silver nose rings were used. These were procured from the Tlingit, who also used them. Bone and silver nose rings were used by both sexes but chiefly by women. Nose ornaments of the forms in vogue among the plateau tribes were not used. Almost all were of haliotis shells procured from the coast. Boys and men wore from one to three shells in each ear, many girls and women had four. Poor people bored their children's ears when they were infants, often only two or three days after birth. The nose was bored
301 at the same time. Wealthy people had their children's
304 ears bored at intervals of two or more years. The first
321 holes, one in each ear, were bored when the child was
515 three or four years old, about two or more years afterwards the second holes were bored, and after similar intervals the third and fourth. A daughter of wealthy parents got her fourth ear rings when about ten or twelve years old. Each time her ears were pierced her father or parents gave a feast and numerous presents to the people. They also gave a feast and presents when her nose was bored. Only people of high rank or possessors
● [616] of much wealth did this. It seems if the father of the girl was a Raven, he gave the presents only to members of his own phratry, and vice versa if a Wolf.

Boring of the ears and nose was done with an awl or with a needle and a quill or a sinew thread inserted immediately afterwards. Earrings were not put in until the wound had healed. Sometimes holes were made with a porcupine quill which was pulled partly through and left there, the sharp end being clipped off or tied up. Labrets were not used by the Tahltan, but only by wealthy people of the Tlingit and Taku. Some of these people gave a feast and killed one or two slaves at the time when their daughters' lip was pierced. It was
[826] believed that wearing of labrets prevented early wrinkling of the face.

301 Bracelets were used long ago. These were of leather and ornamented with quill embroidery. Later
[439] they were replaced by metal bracelets (silver, copper and brass, etc.) procured from the Tlingit. Some of these had incised totemic designs on them, some were flat and others round. Some wealthy women wore as many as six of these on each arm. No horn and wooden bracelets were used. Finger rings came into use in late

Strength and endurance, especially in men, were considered very desirable and of more importance than the stature and shape of body. Tall men were considered good looking, but not equal to short men for strength and endurance. Some tall men were very good walkers but short men were better than tall men as workers and packers. They could carry heavier loads without becoming fatigued. Men who were skilful hunters, good-tempered and of kindly disposition were most desired by women. These qualities were more considered by women than good looks, etc. Some men considered a light smooth skin preferable to fine features. Some would say, "That woman has a beautiful face and fine features but her skin is too rough". It is said that women (or all persons) of the Raven phratry had rougher skins than women or people of the Wolf phratry. This is said to be owing to their descent from Big Raven who like the raven bird had rough skin, especially on the legs. A very wide head or a very flat nose was considered ugly. People having these features were said to resemble slaves. A man would say of a wide-face, flat-nosed person, "That woman is ugly; she resembles a slave".

832 [581] [616]

SUBSISTENCE--VARIETIES AND PREPARATION OF FOOD

The food of the Tahltan consisted of flesh of animals and of fish supplemented by some vegetable food during the summer season. Animal flesh especially was the chief subsistence of the tribe, but fish was also important. In comparison with the Plateau Tribes the use of roots and berries was insignificant. Shell fish taken from salt or fresh water were not eaten. It is said they were fairly abundant in one large lake near the head of Nass River, but in all other parts of the Tahltan country were exceedingly scarce. There were no domestic animals excepting the dog, and no agriculture was practised, except for a period of years the cultivation of tobacco.

262 [23] 241 244]

The flesh of the following animals was considered good food; the caribou, moose, buffalo, sheep, goat, bear (of all kinds), lynx, beaver, marmot, porcupine, ground squirrels, and hare or rabbit.

262 136

Tree squirrels and muskrats were eaten occasionally especially if food was scarce but they were not considered very good food. Squirrels did not have enough fat.

slow walkers. She must not eat fresh meat from any part of a bear for at least three years or for a considerable time after she returned to live among people. She must not eat fresh beaver meat for the same space of time. She must not eat fresh meat of caribou, moose, or marmot for at least one year or during the time of her isolation. If a party had no meat except fresh meat for the girl to eat, the women smoked the meat a little before giving it to her to eat.

If a girl ate fresh bear meat, the hunters would be unable to find bear. If she ate fresh beaver meat, they would be unable to catch beaver. If she ate fresh marmot meat it would rain and the party would have continuous bad weather. A pubescent girl must not cross a salmon stream whilst salmon are running. They would stop running and people would be unable to catch them. The period of isolation and training of girls lasted one to two years, in different families. Nowadays it is only a very few months; also nowadays many girls are not properly isolated; they are merely confined to a corner of the dwelling house. At the end of the training period, the girl had to sweat-bath, after which her body and head was washed and her hair combed by a woman of the opposite phratry. If the girl was Raven, her mother got a woman of the Wolf Phratry to comb the girl's hair. The girl's father had to give this woman a present.

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6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

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Two grandparent and four sibling terms (generally extended to parallel cousins) are found throughout the area. In general the kin terms are consistent with a system that includes matrilocal residence, matrilineal moieties, sororal polygyny, sororate, and asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage with the MoBrDa or FaSiSo.[9]

SOCIAL UNITS LARGER THAN THE FAMILY

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Two permanent social groupings larger than the family or kin group may be distinguished in the Cassiar, the band and the moiety. It is scarcely possible to discern fixed economic or social classes, the latter term referring here simply to a distinction between rich and poor families. The term "band" designates the microcosmic extended family group with its unrelated hangers-on or adopted children. Several such units occupying contiguous districts constituted the unorganized and highly amorphous macrocosmic band for which we have used the word "tribe."[10] Beyond speaking a similar dialect and intermarrying, the component units of a macrocosmic band experienced little feeling of solidarity. Vague shifting boundaries further reduced the integration of these groups. As already pointed out, relatively large aggregates of people remained in temporary association around a fish lake in summer and winter. Such transitory villages, however, probably did not usually include an entire macrocosmic band, although the pattern of living and playing together, like marriage, must have counteracted feuding and thus strengthened the integration of the people in a territory.

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Upper Liard Kaska. Bordering the twisting valley of the upper Liard River lay the territory exploited by the extended-family bands of the Natitu?agotena. Little could be recalled about these units except that on occasion, in winter and summer, many of them camped in one place (tenanat?klone, "lots of people stay together"). Each of the migratory bands recognized a headman. As one informant said, "Before the arrival of the white men there were many bosses" (X). These leaders were primarily family heads so that, according to Chapple and Coon's system of analysis, true (i.e., interfamily) political organization remained only incipiently realized in aboriginal Kaska society.[11] The headman's ability as a hunter, a quality that attracted people to join his band, also helped him to accumulate wealth. When need required, his food resources were freely distributed among the band members. A leader held authority as long as he lived. Upon death a son succeeded to the position of family chief. Should the youth be a poor or indifferent hunter, any other man in the band might be called upon to assume leadership. The death of a headman probably caused a redistribution of the band's personnel around one or more new leaders. Leaders who lost competence found themselves ignored, the people adhering to a more intelligent man. The headman's functions transcended mere food getting. His wisdom derived from experience, and the ability to speak convincingly reinforced his authority in moral matters. When food resources ran low the

[9] See below, pp. 131, 135.

[10] This terminology was first employed to describe the social organization of the Fort Nelson Slave. Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 64–65.

[11] These writers have defined true political authority as arising when one individual or group originates action to persons other than his kin. Chapple and Coon, *Principles of Anthropology* (1942), 330.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

headman encouraged men to hunt. He urged his followers to maintain peaceful relations and reprimanded the lazy, with good reason for a chronically non-productive man represented a drain on the capacity of others.[12] The chief did not often try to punish adult members of his band but could expel a person for certain crimes. Any man might express disagreement with the headman although he would be urged to "watch" his words. The informant appeared to recognize the description of a council and described such meetings at which discussion centered on important hunting plans or on an outbreak of in-group aggression. Men and women attended such deliberations but women never tried to speak.

The dwellers on the upper Liard River were divided into two exogamous matrilineal moieties, the Wolf and Crow. Slightly greater prestige appears to have attached to the Wolf section. According to one old man (X), who had come to the Cassiar as a boy from Espatotena country, the Kaska lacked moiety division prior to the time when Tahltan Indians penetrated the area. When the latter encountered a Kaska Indian they said, "You're a Wolf" or "You're a Crow," thus classifying the population. At first the Kaska did not understand such talk. Eventually they adopted the dual division of the Tahltan.[13] A myth gives a more exotic account of the origin of moiety organization. The tale has been reported for the Pelly River Tutchone by Poole Field and was known to our chief informant (O). The man previously referred to (X), who came from the east, did not know the account. Following is the unedited version of the tale taken from Field's manuscript.[14]

The animals were the first people and the smartest of all the animals, and the wisest were the wolves and ravens, the next was the wolverine. All the animals could talk and understand each other and can yet. The wolves and ravens intermarried and their children were Indians. They called the wolverine their brother-in-law and were very friendly with him.

The wolves and ravens held a meeting and made a law that they would not marry any other animal, but a wolf was to marry a raven and a raven a wolf. The children would take their name from the mother, and their mother would own the country. Sisters and brothers, after they became of age, should not speak or play with each other; when a wolf died the other wolves should make a big feast for the ravens to eat and would find the raven presents but would eat nothing themselves. When a raven died he was to do the same for the wolves and so the world was started.

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[12] Hallowell's figures, which show that in hunting bands one male hunter supports about three persons including himself, appear to be borne out when other groups are examined. Hallowell, *Size of Algonkian Hunting Territories: Function of Ecological Adjustment* (1949); Honigmann, *Intercultural Relations at Great Whale River*, *P. Q.* (1952), 510.

[13] The question of the relationship of dual organization among the Kaska to the social organization of the Tlingit has still to be settled. Although social organization was more complexly developed on the Northwest Coast, the basic feature of moiety organization is similar between the two regions. Tlingit moieties, which were matrilineal and exogamous, are designated Raven (sometimes Eagle) and Wolf. The Kaska fire origin myth given above (see p. 61) suggests that certain animals were somehow closely "related." Thus the wolverine, fox, and black bear "belonged" to the crow; the grizzly bear and lynx were allied to the wolf. Swanton's evidence suggests a similar identification of grizzly bear with wolf among the Tlingit while Krause includes the (black?) bear here too. See Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 398, 415–417, 422–423; Krause, *Tlinkit Indianer* (1885), 112, 122; Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 25, 44, 170–171.

[14] Field, *Unpublished manuscript* (1913), 10–11.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

These laws are followed to the present day amongst all the Indians on the Yukon, Pelly, Teslin Lake, and Upper Liard, but the Mountain Indians do not.

Exogamous moieties regulated marriage. Members of one division also prepared the opposite group's dead for burial. The sides tendered potlatches to one another. On such occasions the members of each group adorned their faces with a particular colored paint, blue for the Crows and red for the Wolves. The designs, however, did not differ. When a large number of people camped together each moiety "rustled" wood for the fire, stacking poles in a single heap. Then they would slide the fuel into the fire, each side in succession adding one piece after the other. Afterwards the brothers-in-law (i.e., the men belonging to opposite moieties) sat around and talked. The practice of fire tending may be regarded as a simple rite of intensification,[15] serving to promote interaction between the segments and thus to contribute to the solidarity of the larger aggregate.

Three social levels were distinguished in the pre-contact Kaska community, the rich, poor, and slaves. Social stratification on the basis of wealth is a prominent feature in the culture of the Pacific Drainage Athapaskans and is even more extensively developed among the Indians of the Northwest Coast. One informant (O) knew about an hereditary nobility among the Tlingit but stated flatly that the system of social stratification found there had no counterpart in the Cassiar. Such a statement is not unexpected in terms of the association to be anticipated between class structure and surplus-wealth production.

A rich man, tenatiin (the same word today is used to designate the Supreme Being), stood out among his fellows because he could support four or five wives, wore finer clothes, enjoyed more possessions, and employed occasional servants. His word received ready attention. "People always listened to a rich man." Wealth derived from skillful hunting and trapping. The poor man, tenayteyxe?it?a, lived with a single wife and often found it difficult to provide even for her and their children. Poorer clothes distinguished the poor man and in group affairs his word carried little weight. Ideally, cordial relations existed between the rich and poor. If a rich man spoke harshly to his less fortunate peer the former's supernatural power might desert him and all his ability to kill game would be reduced. Under such circumstances helping a poor man would assist him to recoup his luck. Poor men who received assistance from wealthier people repaid such help by working for their patrons, for example, visiting the latters' deadfalls. In this way the rich came to enjoy the labor of servants. A slave, xiina (this is said to be a Tlingit word adopted into the Liard River vocabulary), represented a war captive. Inasmuch as the Kaska generally killed enemy male captives, slaves were usually women. A man sometimes referred in fun to his sister's children as slaves.[16]

Dease River Kaska. As late as 1928 Father Allard, an Oblate missionary stationed at McDame Creek, wrote, "All members of the tribe are free to hunt and fish over all the tribal territory. They hunt and fish in little bands of one, two or three families,—each family consisting of father, mother and children, with sometimes other members,

[15] Chapple and Coon, *Principles of Anthropology* (1942), 485-486.
[16] See above, p. 77.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

married or single.[17] Such a description represents the aboriginal pattern of Dease River social organization. Each band recognized a "chief,"[18] or leader, who guided the people in hunting. Outstanding in his ability to secure game, a headman was also always a rich man. Sometimes as many as seven families comprised his following. As a headman aged and became incapacitated, he relinquished his role in favor of a son or brother whose duties included caring for the retired leader.

All the Dease River Indians were divided into two moieties, tsimi ("sides"), the Wolf and Crow. The two sections represented exogamous units in which membership followed the matrilineal line. Potlaches promoted interaction between the divisions, the members of which also prepared each other's dead for burial and competed in sports.[19]

Rich and poor men tended to stand out in the pre-contact community. The former represented able hunters who managed to secure large quantities of meat and skins. Such abundance attracted followers and dependents who accepted their patron's authority. Thus rich men also held positions of band leadership. The poor depended on the wealthy for food and skins. They made no return for such assistance. Sometimes a man became temporarily impoverished as a result of losing his hunting "luck." Help to such a man was advantageous because he would certainly remember the generosity when his fortunes turned. Poverty, as long as it did not stem from laziness, provided no bar to marriage, but a lazy man merited only laughter and jeers.[20]

[17] Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* (1928), 24–25.

[18] When the Hudson's Bay Company entered the Cassiar, they appointed local chiefs to develop trapping. The word is derived from this period. The "company chief" was provided with a certain amount of regalia and received flour and tobacco to distribute to his "boys." Upon the Indians' arrival at the post the manager fired a gun to salute the executive. Prior to this period, informants agreed, no comparable leader existed among the Dease River people.

[19] Teit reports a more complex social system for the adjoining Tahltan. "Their social organization appears to be based largely on that obtaining among the Tlingit. Like the latter, they are divided into two exogamous phratries called Wolf and Raven (as in the case of the Kaska, the former is more important and is said to represent the original Tahltan people). Children belong to the phratry and clan of their mother. Each phratry consists of three clans or gentes, each of which has a hereditary chief and a territory of its own. These six chiefs form the governing body of the tribe. The clans do not have special totems, nor traditions deriving their origin from mythological ancestors. Crests and totems usually belong to the phratry. A seventh clan exists at the present day, having originated about 150 years ago through immigration of and intermarriage with the Tlingit. It belongs to the Wolf phratry, but has no recognized territory nor chief within the country of the Tahltans; it is called by its Tlingit name. There is an aristocracy of rank and wealth, but these nobles have no special rights in hunting grounds, fisheries, etc. Methods of obtaining rank, the potlatch, and many of the social and ceremonial customs of the tribe are closely adopted from the Tlingit." (Teit, *On Tahltan (Athabaskan) Work* [1912], 484–485. See also Jenness, *Indians of Canada* [1932], 373.) Mrs. William Strong, of Vancouver and Telegraph Creek, B. C., loaned the present writer several photographs of a Tahltan potlatch held in relatively recent times. These showed men wearing dark cloth robes embroidered with what appeared to be crest figures and very similar to the robes often illustrated for the Northwest Coast.

In Lower Post we learned of only two exogamous moieties among the Tahltan, the Wolf and Crow. Teit's description of clans with territorial rights does not sound convincing and may refer to local divisions in the Tahltan nation.

[20] Slaves were reported for the Tahltan where one "chief," Makuske, is said to have held 22 captive workers. These hunted and fished for their master and were well treated. (Personal communication from

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tsalona, Espatotena
Frances Lake
Upper Liard

616 *Tselona.* Dichotomous social organization appears to have been absent among the Tselona or Nelson Indians and even today most of these people cannot identify with either exogamous division, except as they adopt a conventional designation following marriage with a woman from one of the western tribes. The fact that one informant from this group affirmed the presence of moieties may indicate his familiarity with the pattern rather than its adoption by the easterly people.

Espatotena. Jenness reports absence of dual organization on the South Nahani and Beaver rivers.[21]

Frances Lake Kaska. Two moieties, the Wolf and Crow, were probably present aboriginally in the Frances Lake area as they are today.[22]

SOCIAL PRESSURE—LAW AND WAR

626 In this section we propose to discuss the social pressure exerted upon members of the community who departed from expected norms of behavior as well as the pressure exercised upon or by outsiders. The first type of pressure includes behavior usually called customary law, while the second corresponds to war. Norms governing property relations and interpersonal conduct will be presented along with the description of the sanctions available for enforcing those norms.

471 423 *Upper Liard Kaska.* With the exception of beaver creeks, the microcosmic band did not enjoy exclusive ownership rights to any territory. In other words no family-hunting-ground system existed in the aboriginal period. Indians felt free to hunt or fish anywhere within "their own country," i.e., the territory customarily inhabited by the macrocosmic band. Generally a man avoided those regions which he knew another family to be currently exploiting. Each family (it is not clear if extended family is implied) controlled its own beaver streams, ownership of these residing in the man, although the [591] entire family shared in the resources. Marriages did not secure new beaver grounds for the husband, who had the choice of returning to his parents' creek to hunt or of taking the animals on his father-in-law's territory. The former pattern seems unlikely because it would result in bilocal residence, a pattern to which informants did not allude. The informant (O) maintained strongly that family control of beaver streams antedated [552] white contact. Ownership was symbolically expressed in the custom of naming such creeks.[23] Other property marks were denied. The development of possessory rights with

George Adsit.) Jenness echos Teit in speaking of a tripartite class structure featuring nobles, commoners, and slaves for the Tahltan. Children of the slaves retained the status of their parents but commoners could raise their rank by potlatching. Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (1932), 373.

[21] Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (1932), 399.

[22] For information of dichotomous grouping north of Frances Lake see above, p. 85.

[23] McLean reports that among the Mackenzie River Slave "the hunter who first finds a beaver lodge claims it as his property, but his claim is not always respected." (McLean, *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* [1932], 343). Among the Pelly River people "each Indian has his own beaver country where he can go at any time and get his dinner, as the beaver, if not disturbed, will stay for years in one place or close in that neighborhood. He arrives at his beaver country to find some one has been before him and not only taken his dinner but also his money in the shape of the beaver skins, and if he catches the man that did it as a rule there is trouble of some kind. This is how

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

enemies were encountered and continued until one or the other side weakened to the point where it sued for peace or fled. Men were not spared for capture. As victims fell warriors wielding stone knives detached scalps by cutting above the ears and along the brow. Then the hair was seized and the scalp torn free from the flesh. Decapitation was not practiced.[26] To sue for an armistice one side might raise a slab of wood on which were painted figures of animals and fish. Lasting peace was promised when an enemy surrendered or when all potential avengers were killed. However fear and mistrust often prevented both sides from immediately negotiating friendly relations on a verbal basis. When peace negotiations were conducted on the spot, the victors usually demanded a number of women by way of indemnity. Unwilling as the latter might be, they were always forced to go. At other times fighting lasted until the enemy had lost many men or had been completely routed. The victors then displayed an orgy of sadism and hate. The bodies of the dead received obscene treatment, a woman's legs being spread apart to expose her naked genitals. Necrophilia, however, was never practiced. Live children were spiked on sharp stakes set around a fire. Live men might be suspended from trees by the feet, a separate line securing each limb. A heavy pole would then be dropped into the crotch of the helpless victim. Neither side troubled to dispose of the dead. Ceremonial cannibalism also followed fighting, but instead of flesh only the raw "belly fat" was eaten. This ritual meal strengthened the victors and enabled them, should necessity demand, to eat raw meat in the future. Young men serving the expedition as porters did not join in the rite.[27] Instead of partaking in the cannibalistic meal a man could fast for four days, eating only a very little food and drinking small quantities of water. Women and children formed the bulk of the prisoners. Mostly the children were killed during the homeward journey, the custom being to strangle or knife one child at each camp made by the returning expedition. Each night a moiety took its turn in executing a child. In winter, for every youngster killed a marker of spruce brush was thrust into the ice at the center of some lake where the group happened to be camping. Still other young prisoners might be killed after the expedition had returned to camp. Women captives became wives who initially had to be carefully watched or tied lest they seek to escape.[28] If any men had been taken they were permitted to marry daughters of the captors. Upon begetting a child the man received his freedom. Exchange of prisoners was unknown. Following a battle every man who had shed enemy blood ritually tore his sleeve. "To kill a man puts human blood in the killer's sleeve," the informant explained metaphorically. Such blood now received the opportunity of flowing out. (A man performed the same rite when his brothers first killed game.[29]) The victors "did

[26] Heads were taken by the Tlingit and scalped as the expedition neared home "unless they had had time to do so on the spot." Scalping is specifically stated to have been done in such a way as to exclude the ears. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 450.

[27] A similar custom is restricted to novices among the Kutchin with the intention of preventing "a sickness which inevitably follows a first killing, as well as general bad luck." Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 87.

[28] For the distribution of captive women within the community see below, p. 131.

[29] See below, p. 110.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

764 is following him.'"[36] People denied fear of a corpse, the informant having heard of such an attitude around Fort Simpson, where only old people could be persuaded to prepare a body for burial because the young men fled into the bush. The dead body was usually removed from the dwelling through the entry. Sometimes the corpse would be carried through the rear wall in order to conceal it from children. People thought that for a child to look at a dead body permitted the ghost to see and perhaps take a fancy to the youngster.[37] It would seem that ghost fear rather than fear of the corpse characterized the people of the Cassiar.

The dead were disposed of in four ways, through cremation, inhumation, abandonment, and caching in a tree. In "really cold" weather the corpse was burned. Members [616] of the moiety opposite to that of the deceased built a coffin of lashed poles corresponding to the size of the body. Dry wood was included in the box along with the corpse. Then the workers struck a fire and departed. Nobody witnessed the actual cremation, as people disliked the odor of burning human flesh. When the blaze died down the men returned to see that the liver had been fully consumed. This organ always burned slowly and had to be destroyed or the "relatives" would become angry. Following complete destruction the skull and bones were raked together and deposited in a small hole dug on the site of the fire.[38] People planted a stick over the place of interment.[39]

In summer a pit three feet deep was dug with sharp poles to accomodate a corpse. Sometimes inhumation also occurred in winter when a fire had to be built to thaw the ground. The grave, usually located on a ridge, was lined with poles and a layer of spruce brush.[40] Grave workers took care not to bring extra poles to the site lest another per-

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[36] Preparation of the corpse became somewhat more elaborate after contact, when the deceased was dressed in new clothes and his face covered with a handkerchief. For two or three days the body might be displayed to visitors who lifted the cloth for a last view.

[37] Tlingit bodies were never removed through the door but through an aperture in the roof or side of the house. The custom magically prevented the spirit from finding its way back to the death place. Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 151.

[38] The only other evidence of secondary disposal is contained in an anecdote about one man, Alec Chief, who in 1909 exhumed his wife's body at Lower Post. She was a Bear Lake (Sekani) Indian and her mother disliked the fact that she had been interred in a Kaska graveyard. Alec took the corpse to McDame Creek, where the people became alarmed at his act and felt that many of them would die because a corpse had been brought from so great a distance. "This is true," the informant assured us. "Many people have died there since then" (0). According to Jones, the Tlingit "will even exhume bodies and bones and bury them in some other spot in order to have an excuse for . . . feasting." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 150.

[177] [39] Jenness affirms that the Kaska had adopted cremation from the Tahltan and Tlingit but later superseded this form of disposal with ground burial. A Dease River informant said exactly this about his own people, as will be reported below. (Jenness, *The Indians of Canada* [1932], 399.) Jones reports that among the Tlingit "at one time cremation was the universal way of disposing of the dead, except of the bodies of slaves, which were embalmed and deposited in dead houses." The ashes collected after burning a corpse were placed in a box which was stored in a death house with clothing, food, and blankets. Disposal of the corpse was in the hands of another "totemic group" who were paid according to the rank of the deceased. Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 136–137. See also Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 430, who says that shamans' bodies were abandoned along the shore.

[40] McLean reports the Mackenzie River Athapaskans around 1844 were accustomed to "dispose of